

SALAMANDER HABITAT WILL COST \$367M

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The state economy would take a \$367 million hit over 20 years to protect more than 380,000 acres for the California **tiger salamander**, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said.

The California **tiger salamander** -- a stocky amphibian with a broad, rounded snout -- was listed as a threatened species last year.

As part of the designation, the agency is drawing a "critical habitat" boundary for the salamander that could limit development involving federal funding or permits. It would not change private land ownership or create new wilderness preserves within the area.

The agency is working on a similar plan for fairy shrimp habitat in Central Valley vernal pools.

An economic analysis has been conducted as part of the proposed habitat designation. Bay Area counties face the biggest economic toll from lost development opportunities, according to a study the agency released this week.

There also are 100,000 acres of proposed salamander habitat in the Northern San Joaquin Valley and Sierra Nevada foothills. Stanislaus County would take a \$4.7 million hit. The economic impact would be \$5.3 million in Calaveras County, \$3.4 million in Merced County, \$740,000 in San Joaquin County and \$30,000 in Mariposa County.

Public comments will be accepted until Aug. 3. For more information, go to www.fws.gov/pacific/sacramento.

CALIFORNIA